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Carter seeks halt to intelligence leaks

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Washington—President Carter and a group of House and Senate members agreed yesterday on the need to plug leaks of intelligence information, contending reliable sources have stopped providing the government data they fear will wind up in print.

However, neither the President nor members of the House and Senate intelligence committees presented any concrete plan for dealing with the situation, and the White House press secretary said later the President has no plans at present to endorse specific legislation.

Jody Powell, the press secretary, also declined to give any specific instances where release of intelligence material had compromised a source.

However, Senator Howard H. Baker, Jr. (R., Tenn.), the Senate Republican leader, said Mr. Carter told the lawmakers of a case in which "a formerly reliable source indicated that he knew of a particular situation but wasn't going to tell us because he was sure it would get in the press."

Both Mr. Baker and Senator Barry M. Goldwater (R., Ariz.) agreed that one problem was too many people have access to classified data. And Mr. Carter acknowledged his administration has been a source of some leaks.

The issue dominated the daily news briefing. Mr. Powell became exasperated at questions that suggested any effort to plug leaks might bring actions such as tactics used by the White House "plumbers" under former President Nixon.

"It doesn't have anything to do with plumbers," Mr. Powell said.

"All of you are familiar with the problem of protecting sources," he told the White House press corps. "I would assume you would understand our concern about it."